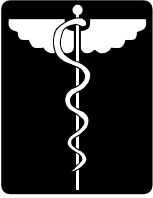


FORT RILEY'S HIPAA TRAINING **(Health Insurance Portability and Accountability)**



An Introduction To Patient Privacy
And Confidentiality Under HIPAA Laws
**Including Routine Client Privacy and Confidentiality*

What is HIPAA?

HIPAA is the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. This defines a broad law dealing with a variety of issues. Under this law, a patient has the right to have his or her health information kept private and secure.



***Please note:** If, as a volunteer, you happen to work outside the “health care system,” this information will still apply to you. Many of the organizations you work at will have “clientele” that will need services that are covered under normal “Privacy and Confidentiality Laws.” If at any time, you have questions, concerns, etc. of information you may “hear,” contact your 1st line supervisor. The information stays “at work.”

Why are Privacy and Confidentiality important?

Patients/Clients have the right, by law, to control who will see their protected health information (PHI). This means that communications with or about patients/clients involving PHI will be private and limited to those who need information for treatment, payment or other direct healthcare operations. Only those people with an authorized need to know will have access to the protected information.

Fort Riley's MEDDAC/DENTACT HIPPA Point of Contacts:

HIPPA Privacy Officer	785-239-7751
HIPPA Assistance Privacy Officer	785-239-7985
HIPPA Specialist	785-239-7744



**If you are at another location your contact is your first line supervisor.*

Protecting Patient Privacy

All organizations that work within MEDDAC/DENTAC are committed to giving a patient/client his/her privacy. As you work, you will see many ways that a patient's privacy is protected. Patient/Client care or discussion about patient/client care is kept private by closing doors so that others cannot overhear discussions. Patient medical/Client records are not left where others can gain access or see them. Restricted access areas are locked to prevent others from entering.

As you perform your job as an employee/volunteer, you need to protect patient/client privacy. When carrying out your job assignments, remember that you do not want to interfere with patient privacy or jeopardize the confidentiality of patient/client information in the process.

Much of this is common sense. Knock on a door and ask to enter before barging in. Keep records out of the public area. If you find records left unattended or overhear a discussion in an unsecured setting, notify a supervisor immediately. Do not discuss a patient's PHI/clients information in front of other patients/clients, or where it can be overheard. Visitors/patients/clients requesting specific health information on another patient/client need to be directed to the information desk or outpatient records. ***DO NOT GIVE OUT ANY INFORMATION!***

As an employee/volunteer in this organization, one of your jobs is to help maintain privacy for patients/clients as they receive care. You are expected to help protect the confidentiality of information that patients/clients give to this facility. There will be times when you will hear or see patient/client information. Never seek out information about a patient/client unless it is job related. Remember, when you do see or hear protected health information in the course of doing your job, you are NOT allowed to repeat it or share the information with others. This includes your family members and friends. This also is applicable in the event you are no longer working in your facility.

Protected Health Information (PHI)

Protected health information is confidential patient information also known as individually identifiable health information. This information includes, patient's/client's name, address, phone #, social security #, medical problem (diagnosis) and any other personal or medical information that can identify the patient/client in any way. This includes, why the patient/client is here, any treatment the patient may receive or any other condition or past health condition.

The hospital collects this information so that it can take care of patients/clients and perform necessary healthcare duties. These are listed as treatment, payment or other healthcare operations. An example of treatment is, when doctors, nurses or other staff is involved with the treatment of the patient. An example of payment is the facility can bill an insurance company for reimbursement for services. An example of other healthcare operations would be, when a doctor calls in a prescription to a pharmacy for the patient/client. These are all authorized functions that can occur with written consent. All other disclosures (release of information) require written authorization.

All members of the workforce at your facility contribute to the quality of care. This does NOT mean that everyone needs to see health information about patients/clients. Many employees/volunteers have no access to either computer or paper records, because there is not a need to know this information. This is an important phrase to remember: ***“Need to Know.”*** In other words, if you need to know the information or have access to it to perform your job duties then it is OK. If not, do ***NOT*** access it, look at, or listen to the Protected Health Information (PHI), for the information ***does not concern you!***

Protected Health Information is confidential, therefore private. That means you should not share the information with anyone, including co-workers, other patients, visitors or anyone else who you come in contact with. This also includes, any observation, conversation and treatment that occurs with a patient/client you know; ***MUST remain confidential.*** Therefore, if you should see your neighbor, friend, co-worker, etc there, do not go home and tell your parents, other family members or friends. ***This will not be tolerated!***

Potential or Possible Consequences

Breaking HIPAA's privacy rules can mean either civil or criminal penalty.

Civil penalties are fines up to a limit of \$25,000 for violations.



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Criminal penalties for wrongful or intentional violations can be as high as \$250,000 with jail time assigned as well.

Knowingly releasing patient information in violation can result in a 1-year jail sentence and a \$50,000 fine.

Gaining access to health information under false pretenses can result in a 5-year jail sentence with a \$100,000 fine.

Your organization is committed to protecting patient/client privacy and confidentiality. When you fail to protect patient information by not following the law, it reflects on your ability to perform your job. We have a “***no tolerance***” policy which means, noncompliant behavior will not be tolerated and that disciplinary measures will be taken. So please think before you talk! Not only will the patient/client appreciate your dedication, so will your supervisor!

Employees/Volunteers are encouraged to report suspected violations immediately to their supervisor or to the HIPAA Privacy Officer/and or other contacts. Do not fear retaliation, in fact your organization considers “reporting incidents” to be a part of your job.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME & WELCOME ABOARD.....